

Homily Mark 1:14-20

- Whenever I hear this Gospel passage about Jesus calling these four fishermen to be His first disciples, I am reminded of a fishing story I heard several years ago.
- Two men board a fishing boat to go fishing for the day. One man is rather tall and he is carrying his very expensive fishing pole and a bucket full of worms. The other man is a rather slender fellow wearing this old floppy fishing hat with fishing hooks and lures (bright shiny objects meant to attract fish) all stuck to his hat. He carries a small stick with a string on the end of it.
- The boat is not crowded and the tall man finds a spot at the front of the boat (not wanting to be seen near the man with the silly hat). The guy with the hat takes a seat at the rear of the boat.
- The tall man puts a worm on the hook and casts his line out into the water and begins to wait patiently – and wait and wait.
- After a while he looks over to the guy with the hat - who has his head down and is putting a lure and a hook on his line. He drops the string into the water and 5 seconds later he pulls up a fish. The tall man still waits for a bite, but nothing.
- The man with the hat now takes a different lure from atop his hat, ties it on the string, drops the string in the water and 2 seconds later pulls up another fish.
- And this continues on, the tall man waiting, the man with the hat pulling in fish after fish. The tall man decides to move

toward the back of the boat and takes a spot next to the man with the hat. Still no luck. He waits and waits while the guy with the hat pulls in fish after fish.

- Finally, in frustration, the tall man turns and says: “I don’t get it. We are fishing in the same spot, I have a top of the line fishing rod, juicy worms and yet you are catching fish after fish and I haven’t caught one.
- After a moment, the man with the hat turns and looks up. To the amazement of the tall fellow – he sees the face of Jesus who responds: “Fish are a lot like people, each is a little different, some are hungrier than others, you have to use just the right lure and hook each time you cast out. Here, borrow my hat.”
- In the world of fishing choosing the right lure and hook is important in order to attract a fish, to catch it’s attention. But using lures and hooks as attention grabbers is not just limited to fishing. We see it in the world around us all the time.
- Two Sundays from now, most of us will be glued to our televisions watching the Super Bowl. And part of the super bowl event has become those entertaining commercials that are aired during game breaks. Many people anticipate the new commercials more than the game itself. There are even ways for you to vote for your favorite commercial. Advertisers spend millions of dollars for 30 or 60 second time slots. And while the commercials are entertaining, make no mistake, the true purpose is to attract our attention, to lure us and hook us on a particular product or brand.

- While there are many voices in our world that call out to us, that lure us to worldly things like products and wealth and power, all three scripture readings today remind us not to close our minds and hearts to the most important voice, the most important lure calling for our attention: Jesus' call to be His disciple – to follow Him. And He calls us over and over again, in so many ways – because He knows each of us is different, some hungrier than others.
- It is a call we see Jesus make personally to four fisherman (Peter, Andrew, James and John) in our Gospel reading today when He says “Come follow me”. And their response is immediate – not “I’ll think about it” or “Maybe tomorrow”. No, they drop everything, right then and they go. We see urgency in their response to Jesus’ call to follow.
- They sensed an opportunity to have that special thing deep down inside of them unlocked by Jesus. They sensed following this man, Jesus, would lead them to something better, more fulfilling. They sensed Jesus would lead them to become who they were really meant to be.
- And their lives did change. Because they were open to Jesus call and let Him in. They met new people, went to new places, faced new challenges and had new experiences. Their minds were open to new truths. They experienced the full range of human emotions from intense sorrow at the crucifixion to the heights of joy unimaginable at the Resurrection. Their lives changed because Jesus transformed them and let them bring His light and love to the world. Think of how sad it would have been, how much they would have missed if they said: “No thanks Jesus, I’ll

stay here”. But they didn’t, they responded with a sense of urgency.

- Today’s Gospel encourages each of us to urgency.
- And urgency is part of life isn’t it? There is always someone or something vying for our “immediate attention”. There are one-day sales. At work or school we often hear: “I need that report or project tomorrow”. We get called to that urgent meeting.
- Sometimes urgency is not a good thing. It can create stress, worry and anxiety. In our haste we can cut corners and not do our best.
- I love stuffed cabbage. In polish we call it “glumpkie”. When you have time to cook it in a slow cooker it is really delicious. But sometimes there is something urgent going on at home and we need to use the pressure cooker (aptly named) in order to get dinner on the table quick. And you can really taste the difference. Sometimes urgent is not a good thing.
- Other times a little urgency can be a good thing. It can motivate us; cause us to change something for the better because the time is just right to act.
- Today’s Gospel encourages each of us to urgency. To respond to our Lord’s call right now, to live our lives as He taught – right now. To bring His love and presence to the world - right now. Because the time to act is just right.
- I don’t know about you but I can be a procrastinator. If I say I am going to do something this week, it will be more like Thursday or Friday as opposed to Monday.

- How many times do we hear the Lord's call, realize it is important – but don't see it as urgent. We can tend to put discipleship on the “back burner”. “I'll get around to that call or visit. I'll get to that change I need to make – but not right now”.
- Today's Gospel calls us to put the Lord's work on the “front burner” and respond in an urgent way. Not the stressful, worrisome urgency the world often thrusts upon us. But an urgency that motivates us to change because that change leads to better things for us and especially for others.
- So today, right now, let's place an urgency on inviting Jesus into our daily lives and to really paying attention to His presence. Let's place an urgency on accepting His love, His healing.
- And let's place an urgency on accepting Jesus invitation to share in His power; by bringing His love into every place and every situation in which we find ourselves.
- Let's accept the invitation to “borrow His hat”.